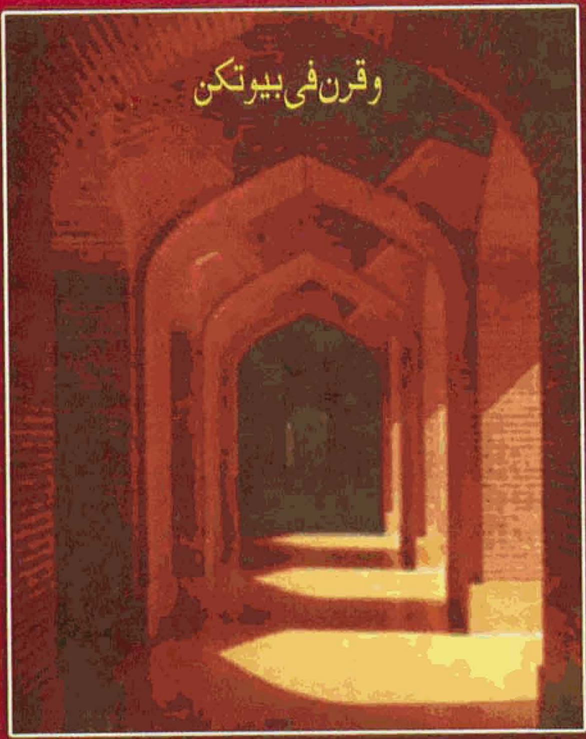
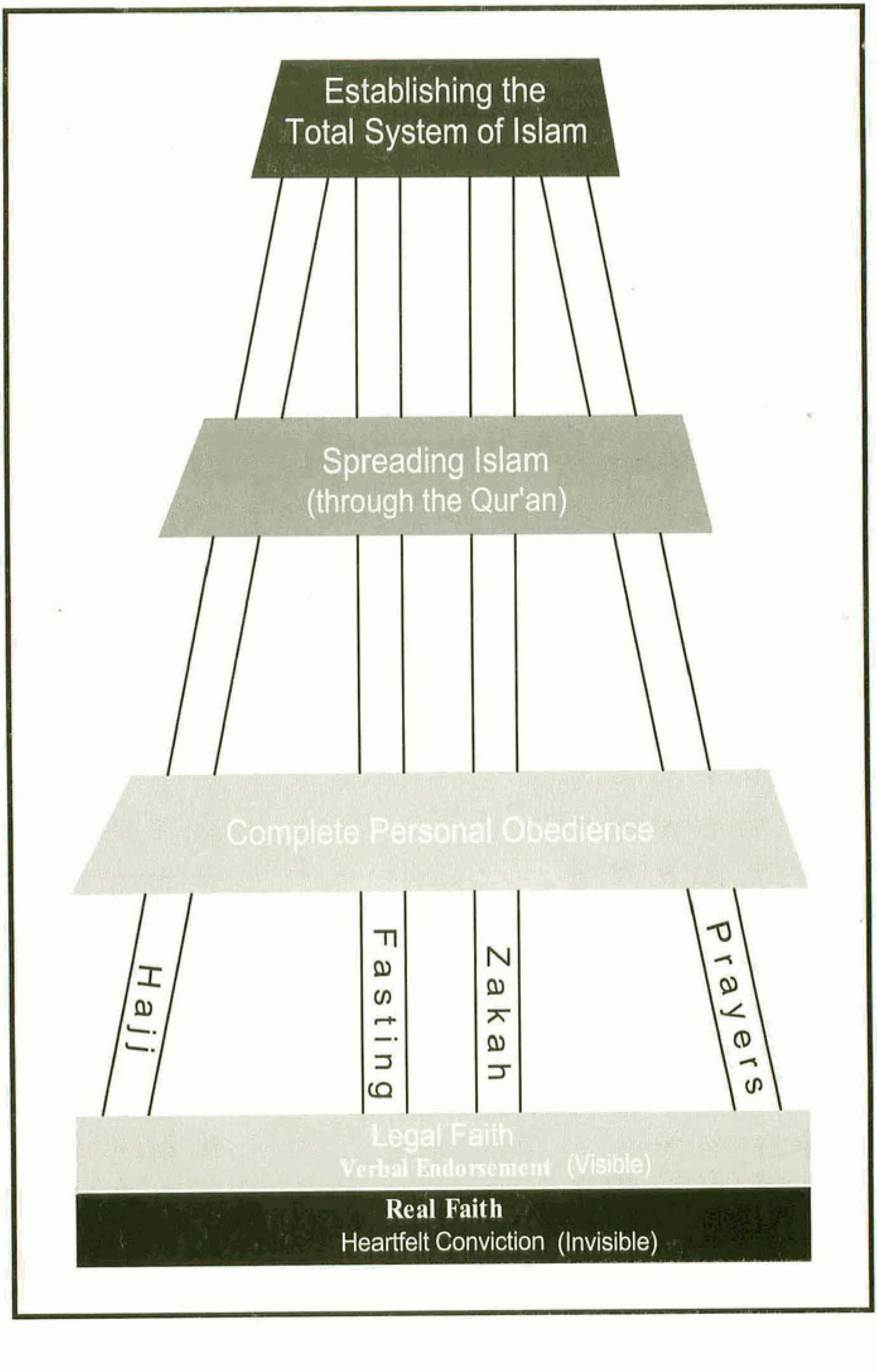
RELIGIOUS OBLIGATIONS OF MUSLIM WOMEN



DR. ISRAR AHMED

Markazi Anjuman Khuddam-ul-Qur`an Lahore (Pakistan)



Establishing the Total System of Islam
Spreading Islam (through the Qur'an)
Complete Personal Obedience
Hajj
Fasting
Zakah
Prayers
Legal Faith
Verbal Endorsement (Visible)
Real Faith
Heartfelt Conviction (Invisible)

RELIGIOUS OBLIGATIONS OF MUSLIM WOMEN

DR. ISRAR AHMAD

Lahore
Markazi Anjuman Khuddam ul Qur'an
2003

1st. Print: April 2003 2,200 copies

Published by Markazi Anjuman Khuddam-ul-Qur'an,
Lahore 36-K Model Town, Lahore-54700
Phones: 5869501-03, Fax: 5834000
Email: anjuman@tanzeem.org
WebPages: www.tanzeem.org

English Name: Religious Obligations of Muslim Women

Urdu Name: مسلمان خواتین کے دینی فرائض

The Anjuman does not reserve to itself any copyright for the publication of this tract. It may be published by any person who happens to be inspired by the same purpose as the writer.

Price: Rs. 40/-
Printed in Pakistan by Shirkat Printing Press, Lahore.

كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ فَمَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَّعِيَّتِهٖ فَالْاَمِيْرُ الَّذِیْ
عَلَى النَّاسِ رَاعٍ وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْهُمْ وَالرَّجُلُ
رَاعٍ عَلٰى بَيْتِهٖ وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْهُمْ وَالْمَرْاَةُ
رَاعِيَةٌ عَلٰى بَيْتِ بَعْلِهَا وَلَدِهٖ وَ هِئَی
مَسْئُولَةٌ عَنْهُمْ وَالْعَبْدُ رَاعٍ عَلٰى مَالِ سَيِّدِهٖ وَ
هُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْهُ اَلَا فَكُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ
وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَّعِيَّتِهٖ (متفق عليه)

Each one of you is a shepherd and is accountable for his flock; the leader who is a shepherd over people is accountable for them; and the man is a shepherd over his household and he is accountable for them; and the woman is a shepherd over the house of her husband and his children and she is accountable for them; and the slave is a shepherd over the property of his master and he is accountable for it; Beware! Hence, each one of you is a shepherd and is accountable for his flock.

[Bukhari, Muslim}

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

اِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ

وَالْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ

وَالْقٰنِتِيْنَ وَالْقٰنِتٰتِ

وَالصّٰدِقِيْنَ وَالصّٰدِقَاتِ

وَالصّٰبِرِيْنَ وَالصّٰبِرٰتِ

وَالْخٰشِعِيْنَ وَالْخٰشِعٰتِ

وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِيْنَ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقٰتِ

وَالصَّآئِمِيْنَ وَالصَّآئِمَاتِ

وَالْحٰفِظِيْنَ فُرُوْجَهُمْ وَالْحٰفِظٰتِ

وَالذّٰكِرِيْنَ اللّٰهَ كَثِيْرًا وَّالذّٰكِرَاتِ

اَعَدَّ اللّٰهُ لَهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةً وَّاَجْرًا عَظِيْمًا

(سورة الاحزاب ۳۳:۳۵)

In the Name of Allah, The Compassionate, The Merciful

Lo! men who surrender unto Allah,
and women who surrender,
and men who believe
and women who believe,
and men who obey
and women who obey,
and men who speak the truth
and women who speak the truth,
and men who persevere (in righteousness)
and women who persevere,
and men who are humble
and women who are humble,
and men who give alms
and women who give alms,
and men who fast and women who fast,
and men who guard their modesty
and women who guard (their modesty),
and men who remember Allah much
and women who remember—
Allah hath prepared for them forgiveness
and a vast reward.
[al-Qur'an 33:35]

Introduction

In the realm of collective human life, mankind has been grappling with certain problems that have plagued many a civilizations and cultures. The varied responses of different civilizations and cultures, to these problems, have been in similitude to the swings of a pendulum, fluctuating from one extreme response to another, trying desperately to find the equilibrium in order to achieve harmony and peace among the members of a society. Among such problems is one that has been present since time immemorial *viz* the role and responsibilities of women in society. From the sale and purchase of females in old Arabia to the absolute freedom of modern Western female, mankind has witnessed one failure after another in achieving an equilibrium between the responsibilities of the two genders so that both can make contributions to society according to and in harmony with their inherent physical and psychological natures.

Only once in human history has a response been articulated and implemented that established the yearned equilibrium. That response was the one put forth by the Muslim civilization in its early pristine stages due to the revolution brought about by the Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

In modern times, in the wake of the feminist movement, having arisen in the West and now spreading all over the world, the issue of women's responsibilities has once again emerged onto the world stage. This time the issue is not as to what is the proper role of women in a society, rather, the Western civilization has articulated a response to the problem according to a purely materialistic

view devoid of all spiritual, transcendental and traditional considerations and is now coercing its version onto other civilizations. Muslim civilization, perhaps the most spiritually motivated, tradition-based, religiously devout civilization present today, is the most defiant in accepting the western ideal of the female. It is for this reason that the Muslim civilization is the prime target of the present propaganda against the traditional role of women.

Under the influence of the western ideal of femininity and social values, the Muslim world itself is engulfed in much confusion and controversy over this topic. This is due to two reasons. Firstly, the backward and ignorant Muslims have imposed their own self-forged model upon the Muslim woman. This model has reduced the Muslim woman to merely a beast of household burdens and a sex-maid, and imperceptibly negates and denies her independent spiritual existence. Secondly, in stark contrast to this, the Muslim proponents of the western model are quite successfully propagating, indeed forcing, the western ideal onto Muslim societies via the popular media. In order to achieve their goals, these proponents, along with their western counterparts, have not only rejected the true Islamic model but have categorically engaged in perverting the Islamic teachings related to this issue. Hence, the logical result - a conflict between the two ideals. This necessitates the clarification of the true Islamic ideal *viz* the obligations of women in society.

The present tract by Dr. Israr Ahmed is an attempt to clarify the obligations which Islam has awarded to women *viz a viz* the framework of family and society. The tract is based on a speech delivered by Dr. Israr Ahmed in

delivered by Dr. Israr Ahmed in June 1991 on the occasion of a conference held by Women's Wing of Tanzeem-e-Islami in Qur'an Academy Lahore. The original speech in Urdu, titled *"Musalman Khawateen Kay Deeni Faraiz"*, was converted to booklet form in May 1996. The present translation is based upon the Urdu booklet.

The present booklet is divided into two sections. First section is laden with Islamic terminology and footnotes. The traversal through this section may prove an obstacle course and an unnecessary nuisance for a reader unfamiliar with or indifferent to such terminology. For such readers a second section has been added which is more flowing and leaves out most of the terminologies and all footnotes.

The first section was rendered into English originally by Momina Khan, later revised by Amina Khawaja and thereafter edited by Khalid Mahmood. The second section is a translation by Amina Khawaja. The Anjuman Khuddam-ul-Qur'an is grateful to all of them for their efforts in this regard.

Editor
April 2003
Lahore

Contents

The Importance of Religious Obligations

It is essential for every individual to acquire a comprehensive understanding of his religious obligations. If a person is ignorant of the duties assigned to him by Allah (SWT) through His *Deen* (the comprehensive code of life), he will be unable to perform his obligations in true spirit. Similarly, if one's concept of the duties incumbent upon him is deficient in any way, he can only partially carry out his religious responsibilities. In such a case he is likely to meet with failure on the Day of Judgment no matter how sincerely committed he might have been to his religion in his opinion.

Another aspect of this problem is equally important that concerns women in special. There is a possibility that a person might take upon himself certain responsibilities that his religion has not imposed on him. This is bound to lead to disastrous consequences because even the desire to do good, when it exceeds the prescribed boundaries, gets channelized to completely undesirable directions. Monasticism, for instance, is the result of human extremism in trying to be pious. It was the desire to do good that led to the concept of celibacy in Christianity which later became the breeding ground for vice and immorality. Hence, negative and undesirable consequences are bound to follow if anyone overburdens his responsibilities. Therefore we must learn and understand our true religious duties and must not burden ourselves with the duties that have not been imposed upon us. When an individual begins to assign certain duties to himself other than the ones Allah (SWT) has imposed on him, he exposes himself to the danger of the *Qur'anic* indictment stated in *Surah* Al-Nisa:

نُوَلِّهِ مَا تَوَلَّى وَنُصْلِهِ جَهَنَّمَ وَسَآءَتْ مَصِيرًا

"We appoint for him that unto which he himself has turned and expose him unto Hell, a hapless journey's end." [al-Qur'an 4:115]

In other words Allah (SWT) lets him opt for the way he himself has chosen and withdraws His support and help.

Therefore, with respect to the obligations we owe to Allah (SWT), we must have a comprehensive consciousness regarding the rights of Allah (SWT) that we have to fulfill, the rights of our 'self' upon us and the rights regarding our fellow human beings. We have to learn to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate, legal and illegal as ordained by Allah (SWT). If we blindly follow our wayward desires, we are bound to cross our limits into the forbidden (*Haram*). Similarly we have to perform our duty towards people, and mankind in general, according to the tenets set by Allah (SWT). If this principle is duly followed, our vision will remain clear and our target defined. If, on the other hand, we follow our own whims and desires, we will deviate from the divinely prescribed path.

The Three Levels of Our Religious Duties: An Analogy of a Building.

In order to understand the true nature of our religious obligations, it will be helpful to use the analogy of a building with three floors[1]. With the help of this analogy, the duties that are particular to men will be explained first. Then, the duties that are equally applicable to women and men and duties with disparities between the two genders will be pointed out.

As mentioned, the building comprises of three floors, standing on four pillars. On the ground floor all you can see are the pillars, as there are no walls, but of course there is the foundation beneath the pillars that supports them. Higher floors are dependent on the floors below them. In that respect, top floor is the highest but not the most important part of the building. Most important part is the foundation, while the pillars become the second most important, for they carry the weight of whole the structure. If the foundation or the pillars are weak, the whole structure would collapse. It is important to note that on the second and third floors, the pillars, hidden behind walls, though still present, become invisible.

The building accurately represents our religious obligations. The foundation of this building is Faith (*Iman*), on which depends the strength of the structure. If the foundation is deep and firmly entrenched in the ground, the above lying structure will be unshakable. On the other hand, if the foundation itself is weak and unstable, the building can come crashing down any

[1] Refer to the inside of book cover.

moment. The pillars are the four obligatory forms of worship: *Salah*[2], *Saum*[3], *Zakah*[4], and *Hajj*[5]. In the Holy Qur'an, *Salah* is always preceded by *Zakah,* however, in the building, *Salah* is placed adjacent to *Saum* as both forms of worship are obligatory for all Muslims. Whereas *Zakah* and *Hajj* are binding upon only those Muslims who possess physical and financial capacity to perform them.

The roof of the first level can be referred to as *Islam*[6], *Ita'a*[7], *Taqwa*[8], and *'Ibadah*[9]. The basic demand conveyed through these four terms is for the individual to submit and surrender wholeheartedly to the commands of Allah (SWT) and His messenger (SAW), becoming in the truest sense of the word, an *'Abd'* - 'slave', thereby fulfilling the very purpose of her creation. As Allah (SWT) says:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

"I created the 'jinn' and humankind only that they might worship Me." [al-Qur'an 51:56]

When this submission, obedience, and piety reaches its climax, Islam becomes *Ihsan* -- the level of consciousness characterized by the feeling that one is in constant

---

[2] The obligatory daily prayers
[3] Fasting during the month of Ramadan
[4] Annual obligatory charity
[5] Pilgrimage to Makkah
[6] 'Submission', 'resignation' and 'surrender'
[7] 'Obedience'
[8] Being conscious of Allah (SWT)
[9] 'Slavery' to Allah (SWT)

presence of Allah (SWT). This is the ground floor of the edifice we are describing.

At the second level, the person invites others towards the message of Islam, striving to the best of his ability to spread and propagate[10] it. He enjoins good and forbids evil[11] and performs the sublime duty of being witness-bearer against mankind[12] so that on the Day of Judgment mankind would not be able to proclaim their ignorance regarding the message of Islam.

The third floor of the building is representative of the establishment of the just social, economic and political system of Islam.[13] Terms such as Islamic Revolution and *Takbeer ar-Rabb*[14] are employed at this level. The goal is to implement Islam in its totality so that the Word of Allah (SWT) reigns supreme as stated in a *Hadith*:

لِتَكُوْنَ كَلِمَةُ اللّٰهِ هِيَ الْعُلْيَا

"So that the word of Allah becomes supreme."
[Bukhari, Muslim]

The intended objective is that the "Word of Allah" becomes the law of the land taking precedence over everything else until the whole social structure including the parliament and judiciary are subordinate to it. To

---

[10] *Tableegh* and *Da'wah*
[11] *Amr bil Ma'roof Wa Nahi 'Anil Munkar*
[12] *Shahadah 'Ala an-Naas*
[13] The Qur'anic term for "establishing the Deen" is *Iqamah Al-Deen.*
[14] "To glorify and proclaim the greatness of Allah (SWT)"

work towards this end by utilizing all of one's material and mental resources, to live for this cause and be ready to die for it, is what constitutes the third and the highest level of our religious responsibilities.

The Difference Between Men and Women's Obligations

The Ground Level: Nearly Similar Obligations

There is a minute difference between the obligations of the two genders as far as the obligations of the ground floor are concerned. Faith is an essential pre-requisite for the salvation of all human beings irrespective of their gender. The words occurring in *Surah* Al-'Asr and *Surah* Al-Teen:

إِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ

"save those who believe and do good works"

are general in nature applying to both men and women. Furthermore, it is categorically stated in the *Ayah*[15] 124 of *Surah* Al-Nisa that those who act righteously, be they male or female, will surely enter Paradise[16].

---

[15] An *Ayah* is a verse of Qur'an. The plural of *Ayah* is *Ayaat*.

[16] وَمَن يَّعْمَلْ مِنَ الصّٰلِحٰتِ مِن ذَكَرٍ اَو اُنثٰى وَ هُوَ مُؤمِنٌ فَاُلٰئِكَ يَدخُلُونَ الجَنَّةَ

"And whoso does good works, whether of male or female, and he (or she) is a believer, such will enter paradise"

The foremost duty of every Muslim, man or woman is to attain firmness of Faith. Then daily prayers and fasting in the month of Ramadan, both being equally compulsory for men and women. *Zakah* and *Hajj* are the duties to be fulfilled by both men and women, who have the ability (physical and financial) to perform them. In addition, women cannot perform *Hajj* unless and until there is a *Mahram*[17] to escort them. Similarly all the restrictions regarding *Halal* and *Haram* are the same for both genders. In short, obedience to Allah (SWT) and His Prophet (SAW) in all spheres of life is meant for the whole mankind, irrespective of any difference in gender.

The slight difference between the obligations of men and women at the ground level can be understood via the example of *Salah*. Women are exempted from the congregational prayers and encouraged to pray at home. At home, it is preferred that they pray in a room instead of the lawn. If the room happens to have a small chamber in it, then the chamber is preferred over the room.

Exceptional has been the case of the congregational Friday and *'Eid* prayers. Women were encouraged by the Prophet (SAW) to attend these two prayers. This was due to the fact that no communication media and other means of propagation (books, magazines or audio/visual facilities) were available in those days. The sermons of Friday and *'Eid* prayers were the sole source of education and information for them. However, these are two exceptions and the overriding rule is that it is better for ladies to offer their prayers privately in their homes rather than at public places.

---

[17] *Mahram* refers to the male with whom a woman can directly interact without having to completely cover herself.

Besides these and other negligible differences, the duties of Muslim men and women at the first stage are similar in nature. It will be pertinent here to discuss three important verses (34-36) of *Surah* Al-Ahzab. Although the direct addressees of these *Ayahs* are the wives of the Prophet (SAW), all Muslim women have been indirectly addressed through them. The first of these *Ayahs* deals with the acquisition of real and conscious faith, the primary source of which is the *Qur'an* itself. Indeed it is reading the Holy *Qur'an,* learning and teaching it and pondering over it that gives rise to faith and strengthens our conviction. The *Ayah* reads:

وَاذْكُرْنَ مَا يُتْلٰى فِيْ بُيُوْتِكُنَّ مِنْ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ
اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ لَطِيْفًا خَبِيْرًا

> *"And bear in mind that which is recited in your houses of the revelations of Allah and wisdom. Lo, Allah is Subtle, Aware." [al-Qur'an 33:34]*

The wives of the Prophet (SAW) are being addressed here. It was in their houses that the Prophet (SAW) received the Divine revelation (*Wahi),* recited its verses, and preached the words of wisdom (*Hikmah*). The word *Hikmah* here refers to the Holy Qur'an, the fountainhead of knowledge and wisdom. Moreover, he (SAW) used to explain the Holy Qur'an in the form of *Hadith*[18], which also reflected the wisdom of Qur'an. The first and foremost lesson that is evident from the verse is that we are being told to engage ourselves in reading and comprehending the Holy Qur'an and *Hadith,* and in

---

[18] *Hadith* pertains to the sayings of the Prophet (SAW).

comprehending the Holy Qur'an and *Hadith,* and in learning and teaching them. For this is what will sustain and enrich our belief in Allah (SWT) as well as bolster and reinforce it. If we hasten to the stage of preaching without first sufficiently strengthening and entrenching our own belief, we will be putting the cart before the horse.

Let us now reflect on the next *Ayah.* In the Holy Qur'an, usually the grammatical tense of the male gender is used while discussing the desirable traits of both men and women. Therefore whenever men are addressed it is understood that women are also being spoken to. The following *Ayah,* however, is an exception in the sense that both genders are mentioned here separately. This signifies that the qualities that Islam expects of its followers are the same for men and women. The *Ayah* states:

إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْقٰنِتِيْنَ
وَالْقٰنِتٰتِ وَالصّٰدِقِيْنَ وَالصّٰدِقَاتِ وَالصّٰبِرِيْنَ وَالصّٰبِرٰتِ
وَالْخٰشِعِيْنَ وَالْخٰشِعٰتِ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِيْنَ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقٰتِ
وَالصَّآئِمِيْنَ وَالصَّآئِمَاتِ وَالْحٰفِظِيْنَ فُرُوْجَهُمْ وَالْحٰفِظٰتِ
وَالذّٰكِرِيْنَ اللّٰهَ كَثِيْرًا وَّالذّٰكِرَاتِ اَعَدَّ اللّٰهُ لَهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةً وَّاَجْرًا
عَظِيْمًا

The ten traits mentioned in this *Ayah* are :

1. اَلْمُسْلِمِيْنَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ

"Muslim men and Muslim women"

Men and women who totally submit themselves to the will of Allah (SWT).

2. اَلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ

"Believing men and believing women"

Those who believe in Allah (SWT), the angels, the prophets, the revealed books and the Day of Judgment.

3. اَلْقٰنِتِيْنَ وَالْقٰنِتٰتِ

"Obedient men and obedient women"

Those who stand like slaves, all vigilant for the Master's call.

4. اَلصّٰدِقِيْنَ وَالصّٰدِقَاتِ

"Truthful men and truthful women"

Those who are true in their words and deeds.

5. اَلصّٰبِرِيْنَ وَالصّٰبِرٰتِ

"Patient men and patient women"

Patience is a very comprehensive term. Patience can mean abstaining from the forbidden. Patience

can imply doing Allah's bidding in the face of ordeals. For instance, performing ablution with icy cold water in the winter when warn water is not available is a manifestation of patience and a submission to Allah's will. Patience also refers to remaining steadfast in the face of all odds and calamities while following the straight path.

6. اَلْخٰشِعِيْنَ وَالْخٰشِعٰتِ

"Humble men and humble women"

Who humble themselves in front of Allah (SWT).

7. اَلْمُتَصَدِّقِيْنَ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقٰتِ

"Charitable men and charitable women"

Who spend on others despite their own needs for the sake of pleasing Allah (SWT).

8. اَلصَّآئِمِيْنَ وَالصَّآئِمَاتِ

"Fasting men and fasting women"

Those who observe fast to cleanse and purify their soul and body from the lust of materialistic desires and bear the pangs of hunger and thirst only to please Allah (SWT).

9. اَلْحٰفِظِيْنَ فُرُوْجَهُمْ وَالْحٰفِظٰتِ

"Men and women who strictly guard their modesty"

In this respect, Islam imposes the same restrictions on men and women.

10. اَلذّٰكِرِيْنَ اللّٰهَ كَثِيْرًا وَّالذّٰكِرَاتِ

"Men and women who indulge much in Allah's remembrance"

In the next *Ayah,* the essence and the sum up of the first level is stated in a very explicit manner.

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَّلَا مُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَى اللّٰهُ وَرَسُوْلُهٗ اَمْرًا
اَنْ يَّكُوْنَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ اَمْرِهِمْ ۚ وَمَنْ يَّعْصِ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ
فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلٰلًا مُّبِيْنًا

"And it is not befitting for a believing man or a believing woman, when Allah and His messenger have decided an affair (for them), that they should have any option about their decision; and whosoever is rebellious to Allah and His messenger, verily goes astray in error manifest." *[al-Qur'an 33:36]*

This means that there is no room whatsoever for any believing man or woman to act according to their personal preferences once Allah (SWT) and His messenger (SAW) have passed their verdict regarding a particular matter. The only option open to them is to listen and obey. And if one chooses to differ from the decision of Allah (SWT) and His messenger (SAW), be they men or women, it would be

plain disobedience and infidelity; they are the ones who have definitely gone astray. This is the essence of *Islam, Ita'a,* and *'Ibadah.* For what is Islam? It is total submission to commands of Allah (SWT) and His Prophet (SAW). What is *Ita'a*? Obedience to Allah and His Prophet. What is *'Ibadah*? To become a slave of Allah in all aspects and at all times. The most important factor in this regard is that we are devoid of authority and choice where there is a clear order from Allah (SWT) and His Prophet (SAW). If authority is exercised against the Will of Allah (SWT) and His Prophet (SAW), it will be against the tenets of Islam. We are only free to act according to our will and understanding if there is no explicit ruling about an issue.

As said earlier there is a minimal difference between the responsibilities of men and women as far as the ground floor of religious obligations is concerned. The disparity gradually becomes more and more pronounced as we advance to the higher levels. It is vital to understand the basis for this disparity in Islam. Islam lays great emphasis on modesty and chastity and aspires to uphold and preserve these values in a Muslim society. That is why there is a separate dress code for men and women and the segregation of genders. The injunctions regarding the dress code (*Satr and Hijab*) are more strict for women and the conditions vary from *Mahram* to non-*Mahram*.[19] What we need to understand here is that the difference in the nature of the duties assigned to men and women is in order to maintain an atmosphere of modesty, decency and purity in the society.

---

[19] Non-*Mahrams* to women are those men with whom women cannot interact.

Islam discourages unnecessary intermingling of men and women and determines separate spheres of activity for them. In this context, we can easily understand why a woman's prayer is best in the most secluded part of the house, and why her presence is discouraged in the mosque (though not forbidden). In short, the rationale behind the dissimilarity between men and women's obligations, whether slight or pronounced, is to close all avenues that may lead to indecency and immorality.

The Second Level: The Three Circles Of Da'wah

The second level deals with spreading the message of Islam to others. A general principle of *Tableegh* and *Da'wah*[20], proposed by Islam, is that we should begin by first reforming our own selves. Next, we should focus on those who are closest to us - our immediate family members. Only then we may approach other people. Contrary to this, preaching Islam in foreign lands while the religious condition of one's own house is unsatisfactory, indicates that the process of *Da'wah* has been inversely prioritized. Such practice can never bring about the desired results as were seen as a consequence of *Da'wah* carried out by the Prophet (SAW) and his companions.

If we keep the proper sequence in mind, we can conclude that, for the Muslim woman, the highest priority should be her home. The propagation of Islam is simultaneously carried out in three integrated circles. In the first circle she should bring up her children as Muslims in the true sense of the word. The second circle of *Da'wah*

---

[20] *Tableegh* and *Da'wah* are terms used for spreading and propagating Islam.

includes Muslim women and the third consists of *Mahram* males. These three circles and domains are the premises in which the Muslim woman is required to perform *Da'wah*. Concerning the first circle, *Surah* Tahreem states:

قُوْا اَنْفُسَكُمْ وَاَهْلِيْكُمْ نَارًا

"Save yourself and your families from the fire."
[al-Qur'an 66:6]

In the same context, we should also consider the following *Hadith* narrated by 'Abdullah bin 'Omar (RA) :

كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَّكُلُّكُمْ مَّسْئُوْلٌ عَنْ رَّعِيَّتِهٖ

"Everyone of you is a shepherd and every one of you is accountable for his herd."
[Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud]

Just as a shepherd is responsible for his herd, everyone is responsible and accountable for the people he is in charge of. Then the Prophet (SAW) added,

وَالرَّجُلُ رَاعٍ فِيْ اَهْلِهٖ وَمَسْئُوْلٌ عَنْ رَّعِيَّتِهٖ

"a man is a custodian of his home and he will be held accountable for his family."

Meaning, everyone will be asked about the duties which he had to perform concerning his family and household. He will be asked about whether he carried out his duties of educating them and fulfilling their rights. Then the Prophet (SAW) said,

وَالْمَرْأَةُ رَاعِيَةٌ فِيْ بَيْتِ زَوْجِهَا وَمَسْئُوْلَةٌ عَنْ رَّعِيَّتِهَا

"And a woman is responsible for her husband's home and she will be held accountable for whatever and whoever she is given charge of."

Naturally her children are the most vital part of her husband's home. In another narration, the word 'children' is mentioned separately:

وَالْمَرْأَةُ رَاعِيَةٌ عَلٰى اَهلِ بَيْتِ زَوْجِهَا وَوَلَدِهٖ وَ هِىَ
وَمَسْئُوْلَةٌ عَنهُم

"And a woman is responsible for her husband's household and his children and she is accountable for them."

She is accountable for the servants as well but her main responsibility is with respect to the children.

It goes without saying that the future of a nation depends, to a great extent, on its coming generation and the tremendous task of bearing and rearing it has been placed squarely on the shoulders of the mother. It is the mother who acts as the very embodiment of selflessness, sacrificing her own comfort for the sake of her children. It is the mother who acts as the first school that the child comes in contact with. The poet-philosopher Iqbal says about a Muslim mother:

آسیا گرداں ولب قرآں سرا

"O Woman! Grind grain while Qur'an is on your lips"

In our childhood we had the privilege of witnessing with our own eyes such mothers who used to recite the Qur'an while nursing their child and grinding grain. Something of value must transfer from the mother to the child in a subtle and imperceptible manner during this process. After all, we are asked to say *Adhan*[21] and *Iqamah*[22] in the newborn's ears. There has to be some logic behind this ritual. The infant is obviously not capable of making sense of the words but all of us know that a tape-recorder is also a senseless device that efficiently records voice impressions and reproduces them. Therefore, it would not be too far fetched to assume that some meaningful impressions are conveyed to the child's subconscious that leave a lasting impact on his personality. As Iqbal said:

کہ در آغوش شبّیرے بگیری!

"In this condition, in your lap, will grow a son like Hussain [RA]"

Hence, the command from the Prophet (SAW):

اُطْلُبُوا الْعِلْمَ مِنَ الْمَهْدِ اِلَى اللَّحْدِ

"Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave."

---

[21] Call for prayer.

[22] Call to begin the prayer of congregation.

The major responsibility entrusted to the mother is imparting purposeful education and moral values in her children. To seek other avenues at the cost of this major responsibility is certainly not admissible. If, however, her circumstances are such that she can spare some time, she should definitely do *Da'wah* work outside her home.

What actually is happening in our society is that we tend to preach in the remote corners of the world but overlook our homes. We should remember the Qur'anic admonition :

أَتَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنْسَوْنَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ

"Do you enjoin righteousness upon mankind and you yourself forget (to practice it)?" [al-Qur'an 2:44]

We cannot go on a mission to save the world unless we save ourselves first. Our younger generation is at the receiving end of the most vicious onslaught of western cultural influences. Our youngsters today are exposed to the pernicious effects of media like newspapers, magazines, television and the Internet. In this scenario, if the responsibility of bringing up a child is set aside and women spend more time in preaching outside their homes, then this is an adulteration of the priorities of their responsibilities.

As for stepping out of the home to preach other women, surely this needs to be done in a very organized manner. In this endeavor, middle-aged women are best suited for the task as the restrictions of Islamic dress code

are relaxed to a great extent in their case. *Surah* Al-Noor states regarding the aged women:

لَيۡسَ عَلَيۡهِنَّ جُنَاحٌ اَنۡ يَّضَعۡنَ ثِيَابَهُنَّ

> *"It is alright for them if they put aside their coverings."*

They certainly will continue to follow the orders of *Satr*[23], but the orders of *Hijab*[24] will now be relaxed in comparison to a young woman. However, what happens in our society is that the ladies who have always been observing *Satr* and *Hijab* and staying at home become so accustomed to it that they are reluctant to go out even in their old age. This attitude needs to be changed. They should not hesitate to participate in the activities that involve studying and teaching of the Holy Qur'an in their own cities, even if they are not accompanied by their *Mahrams*. As far as young women are concerned it is extremely inappropriate for them to go out alone. If they can afford to devote time to the propagation of their *Deen*, they should cover themselves properly and a *Mahram* should accompany them. Keeping these general guidelines in mind, Qur'anic study circles must be arranged and there should be a systematic and intensive effort to organize

---

[23] *Satar* refers to the parts of body which, in normal conditions, must be covered at all times and may not be displayed to anyone but one's spouse. The whole of a woman's body is considered *Satr* except hands, feet, and face excluding ears and hair.

[24] Hijab refers to the parts of body which, in normal conditions, must be hidden from non-*Mahrams*. *Hijab* refers to *Satr* plus face excluding the eyes.

women's gatherings on a regular basis for the purpose of effectively propagating the message of the Holy Qur'an to the masses. This is the most-pressing need of the time.

The third circle of women's efforts in this regard is that of the *Mahram* men i.e., husband, brothers, father, uncles and nephews, *etcetera* (please note that the husband's nephews are not *Mahram*). You must have noticed that under the influence of various Islamic movements like the *Tableeghi Jama'at* and *Jama'at-e-Islami*, more and more young men and women belonging to the middle class are choosing to adopt the Islamic way of life. We see many bearded young men and veiled young women whose parents and other family members are oblivious of Islamic values. In this scenario, the younger generation needs to reach out to the older one to invite them to the right path of Islam. The third circle for Muslim women, therefore, involves their *Mahram* men.

In Pakistan we see that a particular Islamic group sends its female members from door-to-door canvassing prior to elections. As this group aspires to bring about change through the ballot box, naturally they need to get in touch with the masses for large scale campaigning which probably leaves them no choice but to send the women door to door. But whatever their compulsions are, this practice is highly inappropriate. Even though these women follow the Islamic dress code, which in itself is commendable, nonetheless, they go to houses of people who are completely alien to them. Islam does not allow Muslim women to freely mingle even with unfamiliar women. The list of *Mahrams* given in *Surah* Al-Noor includes "their women" -- meaning familiar women who are known to be of decent, righteous character. Hence,

Islam does not allow strange women into homes and it certainly does not allow women to go into strange houses.

We believe that the real change in the existing secular system can never be brought about through the prevailing election process. This change calls for a moral, ideological, and intellectual revolution that permeates all the spheres (i.e. political, social and economic) of life. We need to work towards forming a "*Hizbullah*"[25], and for that, women should ideally be working within the three circles that have been discussed above. In exceptional situations, their duties may exceed the ones already mentioned. However under the present conditions, working within the three spheres mentioned is all that they are required to do in the realm of *Da'wah* and *Tableegh.*

The Third Level: Women and the Struggle for the Establishment of Islam

The third level involves the struggle for an Islamic Revolution, the peak of all obligations, for bringing about an Islamic Order "so that Allaah's Word reigns supreme" At this stage the formation of an organized and dedicated group of individuals becomes inevitable. Such a group will consist of committed individuals who will stand united for a single purpose: abolishing tyranny of the status quo, to set up in its place, the ideal Islamic System of Social Justice. These individuals will be ready to lay down their lives for this cause. This is the responsibility that women have been exempted from except in certain extreme cases.

---

[25] *Hizbullah* is an organized and disciplined party working for the ascendancy of Islam.

Some people falsely assume that women too are required to participate in this highest level in the hierarchy of our responsibilities. They argue that in the glorious history of Islam, women did leave their homes and sacrifice their lives. Sumayyiah (RA) was martyred along with her husband Yasir (RA). Ruqayyiah (RA) migrated to Madinah just as her husband Usman (RA) did. However, the people who quote these instances fail to realize that the migration and martyrdom of these women represent the essence and apex of the first level (not the third) of our building. It was for the sake of her staunch belief in *Tauheed* - the oneness of Allah (SWT) - that Sumayyiah (RA) did not yield before Abu Jahal. A woman giving her life in order to keep her faith is the foundation (representing *Iman),* in relation to our building, where there is no difference in men's and women's responsibilities. It was a matter of standing up for what one believes in and remaining steadfast even if one's life is at stake. It was not a matter of encountering the disbelievers on the battlefield. Even today, if a believing woman is faced with a choice between her faith and her life, the best and the most honorable thing is to remain firm on her faith and not to care for her life. It is, however, permissible in Islam to profess disbelief verbally in such a life threatening situation. Sumayyah (RA) and Yassir (RA) sacrificed their lives to uphold their faith, whereas their son 'Ammar (RA) saved his life by orally claiming faithlessness.

Similarly, when practicing Islam becomes impossible in a land then the Muslims should migrate in the way of Allah (SWT). Ruqayyah (RA) and Umm Habibah (RA) with few other women migrated with their

Mahrams because life in Makkah became unbearable. Migration for keeping the Divine message alive while abandoning homeland and belongings is actually holding on to faith, the foundation of the building of Islam. In short, remaining loyal to Faith is something that applies to both men and women as does migrating in the way of Allah (SWT). In this connection, please note the following verse of *Surah* Aal-e-'Imran:

فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ اِنِّيْ لَآ اُضِيْعُ عَمَلَ عَامِلٍ مِّنْكُمْ مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ
اَوْ اُنْثٰى بَعْضُكُمْ مِّنْ بَعْضٍ فَالَّذِيْنَ هَاجَرُوْا وَاُخْرِجُوْا مِنْ
دِيَارِهِمْ وَاُوْذُوْا فِيْ سَبِيْلِيْ وَقٰتَلُوْا وَقُتِلُوْا لَاُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْهُمْ
سَيِّاٰتِهِمْ وَلَاُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ

"And their Lord hath heard from them (and He says) Lo! I suffer not the work of any worker, male or female, to be lost. You are one and the same. So those who fled and were driven forth from their homes and suffer damage for My cause, and fought and were slain, verily I shall remit their evil deeds from them and verily I shall bring them unto gardens underneath which rivers flow." [al-Qur'an 3:195]

Men and women were all put through the same ordeals during the thirteen-years stay of the Prophet (SAW) in Makkah. They were the victims of the same hatred and persecution. And they were all forced to leave their beloved homes. They also sacrificed their lives for the noble cause of defending their faith. On the other hand, we do not find any instance of female participation in the armed conflicts in which Prophet Muhammad

(SAW) and his valiant companions raised the flag of the Revolutionary Movement in Arabia.

The Prophet (SAW) sent eight expeditions immediately after the migration to Medina and there is no mention of any women being sent. The first real battle fought in the way of Allah (SWT) in Islamic history was the battle of Badr and the books of *Seerah* make no mention that Muslim women took part in it. On the basis of this, we can easily determine what our religion requires from us. Instead of inventing fictitious duties for us, we should objectively understand our actual responsibilities.

Uhad is the only battle where we find, as an exception, when women participated in the battle but this was an emergency situation. The news that seventy Muslims were martyred had reached Medina. There was the rumor that the Prophet (SAW) himself had been martyred. Naturally there was a state of extreme panic in the city. Moreover, Uhad was only two and a half miles away from Madinah. Therefore, the muslim women rushed to the scene of the battle to tend the wounded and supply water. In addition, we must keep in mind that the commands regarding *Hijab* had not been revealed at that time. It is important for us to keep in mind the chronological sequence of the events. The orders of *Hijab* were introduced for the first time in *Surah* Al-Ahzab, which was revealed following the battle of Ahzab after the fifth year of *Hijrah*. *Surah* Al-Noor was revealed in 6th year after *Hijrah* and contains explicit commands about *Hijab*.

Afterwards in the battle of *Ahzab*, which was the toughest battle of all, the Muslims fought while their women stayed inside a fortress. There is no evidence of any woman taking part in this battle. Only Safiya (RA) is

said to have killed a Jew in self-defense. In 7th year after *Hijrah,* the battle of Khyber was fought. The following incident, narrated in the books of *Hadith* and *Seerah,* throws light on the role of women in this battle:

> *"Hashraj bin Ziyad narrates from his grand mother that she and five other women left for Khyber along with the Prophet (SAW). She says, 'When the Prophet (SAW) learned of our presence, he called for us. When we came to him, he was furious and said, 'With whom have you come and with whose permission?' We said, 'We will make wool and work in the cause of Allah (SWT). We have some bandages for the wounded; we will hand arrows to the fighters and give them water.' The Prophet (SAW) said, 'Get up and go back. When Khyber was conquered the Prophet (SAW) gave us a share from the spoils of the battle. 'Hashraj says he asked his grandmother about what she received as share. She replied, 'Some dates.'"*

There are lessons to be learnt from this story. The Prophet's query: "With whom have you come and with whose permission" is very important. Whenever a woman comes out of her house she should see to it that she is accompanied by a *Mahram.* Sometimes women who want to work for their religion become over-zealous and cross certain limits that they are supposed to stay within. For example, they begin to neglect their household duties and their children. It will be useful for such ladies to bear in mind a certain incident from *Seerah:*

> *Asma bint al-Yazeed (RA) was an Ansari woman. She once came to the Prophet (SAW) and said, "Women have sent me to you as their representative. What all of them are saying is similar to what I will*

say and they have the same point of view as I. Allah (SWT) sent you as a Prophet (SAW) to both men and women. Therefore we believed in you and obeyed you. However, as women, we are supposed to observe veil and remain inside our homes. Our duty is to keep our men satisfied and to look after their children. Men outdo us in matters such as the Friday congregational and funeral prayers and also in Jihad in the way of Allah (SWT). When they go to war, we protect their houses and tend their children. Will we get the same reward as them?" When the Prophet (SAW) heard this eloquent speech, he turned to his companions and asked them, "Have you ever heard a woman give a more excellent speech about her religion than this one?" All the companions of the Prophet (SAW) swore that they had not. Then the Prophet (SAW) turned to Asma (RA) and said, "O Asma, help me in conveying my answer to the women who sent you as their representative. Fulfilling your housekeeping responsibilities, keeping your husbands happy and co-operating with them, is equal to all those acts of the men that you have described." Asma (RA) returned happily after listening to this answer and did not raise any objection.

What we must learn from this incident is that our actual aim is to carry out the tasks that Allah (SWT) has assigned to us. If we assume certain duties that were never meant for us, it will be totally unfair to our own selves. Whenever an individual takes on unnecessary, self-assigned duties Allah (SWT) lets him carry them out but withdraws His help and support. And if, in the process, he happens to exceed Divinely ordained limits, he may end up among the

unfortunate lot in the Hell according to the *Qur'anic* words:

نُوَلِّهٖ مَا تَوَلّٰى وَنُصْلِهٖ جَهَنَّمَ وَسَآءَتْ مَصِيْرًا

"We appoint for him that unto which he himself has turned and expose him unto Hell, a hapless journey's end" [al-Qur'an 4:115]

In short, women are exempted from any direct participation in the duty of establishing the *Deen*. They are indirectly involved, by taking care of the household and children in order to provide a harmonized and congenial atmosphere for the men, who are directly involved in this struggle. They should focus on fulfilling the responsibility of bringing up the children and of their education and moral guidance. In this way, men will have ample free time to devote themselves to the cause of Islam. Women should facilitate their husbands' participation in the struggle for the supremacy of Islam by relieving them of unnecessary burdens and by not being over-demanding. By doing this, they would be making the most valuable and a substantial contribution to this noble cause. After all why should they bother to come out if they can earn the same reward inside their homes!

Difference Between Bai'yah of Men and Women

Regarding the differences between men and women, a significant difference exists in the *Bai'yah*[26] of the two genders. Just before the *Hijrah*, the Prophet (SAW)

[26] A pledge of allegiance

took the pledge for *Iqamah al-Deen,* also known as the Second Pledge of 'Aqabah, only from his male companions. The terms of this oath were very strict and demanded the obedience to the *Ameer* - leader - under all circumstances, even if one has to force himself against his will. It also required one to obey all the persons in the hierarchy of authority other than the *Ameer.* Without doubt the terms and conditions of this oath are very strict, but the formation of an organized and dedicated group of people who are ready to make any kind of sacrifice to bring about an Islamic revolution, cannot be achieved without such discipline. In the oath, therefore, the whole emphasis is on discipline and maintenance of this discipline is guaranteed positively by stressing the right attitude of "listen and obey" and negatively by sealing off all doors that might lead to disobedience or disorder in the ranks of the revolutionary group.

As far as the *Bai'yah* of women is concerned, at the occasion of the Second Pledge of 'Aqabah, there is no mention of either women not taking part in it, nor any mention of a separate *Bai'yah* for them (even though the presence of at least two women, at this occasion, is confirmed). However, the oath administered to women, as can be proved by the Qur'an and *Sunnah,* is basically an oath of piety and righteousness: to denounce all gods but Allah, to give up bad deeds - harming, lying, stealing, adultery, fabricating falsehoods and finally not to go against any order of Allah (SWT) and His Prophet (SAW). The words used in this *Bai'yah* are same as those of the First Pledge of 'Aqabah, which took place a year before the second pledge, taken from twelve men from Yathrib (Madinah). This proves that the strict discipline, required of men, as members of a disciplined organization, is not

required of women. This can be naturally explained by the fact that women are not supposed to directly participate in the highest stage of religious responsibilities. Their participation is more of an indirect nature[27].

Organization – Compulsory for Both Men and Women

Nonetheless, I believe that *Jama'ah* (organization) is necessary for both men and women. It provides a positive environment in which we take inspiration from others. It is on the account of being a part of this collective existence that we find motivation to do more and more good deeds and the courage to abandon the *Nawahi* (the forbidden things). Therefore, Allah (SWT) has not deprived women of the blessings and spiritual benefits of belonging to an organization. Allah (SWT) says in *Surah* Al-Taubah :

وَالْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ وَالْمُؤْمِنٰتُ بَعْضُهُمْ اَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَاْمُرُوْنَ
بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيْمُوْنَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَيُؤْتُوْنَ
الزَّكٰوةَ وَيُطِيْعُوْنَ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ ؕ اُوْلٰٓئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللّٰهُ
اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَزِيْزٌ حَكِيْمٌ

"And the believers, men and women, are protecting friends of one another; they enjoin the right and forbid the wrong, and they establish worship and they

---

[27] It should be pointed out that the *Bai'yah* taken by the *Sufiyaah,* known as *Bai'yah al-Irshad,* is similar to the one taken by the women. This is due to the fact that the concept of *Iqamah al-Deen* as an obligation is non-existent among them.

pay the poor-due and they obey Allah and His messenger (SAW). As for these, Allah will have mercy on them. Lo! Allah is Mighty, Wise."
[al-Qur'an 9:71]

It was due to the blessings and benefits of the organizational environment that the Prophet (SAW) took *Bai'yah* from Muslim women as well. As a result, women felt that they were also part of an organization, that they too had allegiance to a leader, that they also had to listen and obey the commands of the Prophet (SAW), that they also had to do good deeds, and that they were under an oath. This gave rise to the spirit of self-criticism, that if they deviated from their oath, then they would be breaching the covenant and held responsible for it.

Consequently, we have a women's wing in Tanzeem-e-Islami and they also take *Bai'yah*. Our highest priority is to emulate, in all matters and as closely as humanly possible, the example set by our Prophet (SAW). Consequently, in the Tanzeem that we have formed for the purpose of bringing about an Islamic Revolution, we expect both men and women to refrain from evil and to struggle for making Allah's Word supreme and we consider both men and women as being bound by the pledge of allegiance occurring in the 111th verse of *Surah* Al-Taubah[28]. However, the more stricter *Bai'yah* of

---

[28] *"Allah hath purchased from the believers their lives and their wealth; for theirs (in return) is the garden (of Paradise): they fight in His cause and slay and are slain: a promise binding on Him in truth through the Torah, the Gospel and the Qur'an: and who is more faithful to his covenant than Allah? Then rejoice in the bargain which ye have concluded: that is the achievement supreme."*
[al-Qur'an 9:111]

"listening and obeying *fee al-Ma'roof*"[29], which we find in an agreed-upon *Hadith*, has been exclusively reserved for men only. The oath administered to women is the one found in the 12th verse of *Surah* Mumtahanah[30]. In the said verse, instead of positive demand of "listen and obey", women are asked "not to disobey" the messenger of Allah (SWT). It is easy to note that the pledge of allegiance for women is much more lenient as compared to men. This is further supported by the fact that the above *Ayah* includes the wording of "*Fee Ma'roof*" even in the obedience to the Prophet (SAW).

In conclusion, women need to belong to a *Jama'ah* and to pledge allegiance to an *Ameer* so that they can have constant self-censor and a consciousness of being an active participant in the struggle for the establishment of *Deen*. However, they are not entrusted with the responsibility of directly taking part in this struggle. They have a comparatively more passive, but equally vital, role to play. Hence, the best course of action for them is to stick to their

---

29 "*Fee al-Ma'roof*" refers to obeying someone as long as the orders are within the bounds of *Shari'ah*. In case of the Prophet (SAW), such condition need not exist, however, for any other leader it is necessary to enforce this condition.

30 "*O Prophet! when believing women come to thee to take the oath of allegiance to you that they will not associate in worship any other thing with Allah that they will not steal that they will not commit adultery (or fornication) that they will not kill their children that they will not utter slander intentionally forging falsehood and that they will not disobey you in any just matter, then you should receive their allegiance and pray to Allah for the forgiveness (of their sins): for Allah is Oft-Forgiving Most Merciful.*" *[al-Qur'an 60:12]*

Divinely-prescribed role. May Allah (SWT) prevent us from taking on unnecessary burdens and May He (SWT) help us in performing our duties in the best possible manner. *Aameen*!

RELIGIOUS OBLIGATIONS OF MUSLIM WOMEN

Translation By

Amina Khawaja

The Importance of Religious Obligations

It is essential for every individual to acquire a comprehensive understanding of his religious obligations because it is only after he acquires such an understanding that he can possibly begin to fulfill them. If perchance one's concept of the duties incumbent upon him is deficient in any way, for example if he is aware of some of his duties and oblivious to others, of course he can only *partially* carry out his religious responsibilities. In such a case he is likely to meet with failure on the Day of Judgment no matter how sincerely committed he might have been to his religion in his opinion.

Another possibility is that a person might take upon himself certain responsibilities that his religion has not imposed on him. That is bound to lead to disastrous consequences because even the desire to do good, when it exceeds the prescribed boundaries, gets channelized to completely undesirable directions. History bears testimony that it was the desire to do good that led to the concept of celibacy in Christianity which later became the breeding ground for vice and immorality. There is an incident in the life of the Prophet (SAW) that is particularly relevant here.

> *Anas Bin Malik narrates in an Hadith that three of the companions of Muhammad (SAW) asked his wives about how often the Prophet (SAW) prayed during the night and fasted through the day. They were not satisfied by the answer and thought that what they had heard would not be quite enough for them. They reasoned that since the Prophet(SAW) is innocent and can never commit a sin, he is therefore not required to worship that much. As for themselves,*

they decided to follow a more rigorous routine. One of them professed he will fast daily for the rest of his life. The other said he would stand in prayer every night till morning. And the third claimed he would not ever marry. When the Prophet (SAW) heard about what they had said, he called for them and expressed his displeasure. He said: 'I am the most God-fearing among you and the most pious, yet I sleep at night, I do not fast all the time and I have married as well. Beware, he who does not like my way has no affiliation with me'.

The last sentence of the narration is of particular significance. We will have to examine our lives in the light of these deeply meaningful words to find out whether we are really acting in accordance with the way of the prophet in the individual and collective spheres of our existence. With respect to the obligations of Muslim women we should focus on the behavior of the wives of the Prophet (SAW) because they provide the muslim women of the with the ultimate role models to emulate being the first recipients of women-specific sayings of the Prophet (SAW).

Undesirable consequences are bound to follow if one espouses as one's own certain responsibilities that he is, in truth, not required to fulfill. This can be illustrated by an example from the present age. Various organizations and movements are working towards the end of bringing about an Islamic revolution. However, more often than not such movements falsely assume that it is their responsibility to establish the supremacy of the Word of God. They forget that their responsibility is merely striving to their utmost and utilizing whatever means and resources are best suited to the purpose. What happens is,

since they are under the delusion that it is up to them to usher in the Caliphate, they turn in their desperation to certain inappropriate means if the appropriate ones fail to work and therefore are led farther and farther away from their actual destination.

I have been questioned quite frequently about the religious obligations of Muslim women. Recently I received quite a few letters that raised the same issue. I believe the reason behind these queries is that the activities of the female members of a particular religious organization are quite conspicuous in Pakistan and women want to know whether these activities are really in accord with the true spirit of Islam. I will attempt to address these concerns in this sitting. May Allah (SWT) guide me to the correct and most balanced view, one that is closest to the Qur'an and prophetic conduct and may He help me convey it.

When an individual begins to assign certain duties to himself other than the ones Allah (SWT) has imposed on him, he exposes himself to the danger of the Qur'anic indictment:

> *"We appoint for him that unto which he himself hath turned." [al-Qur'an 4:115]*

In other words Allah (SWT) lets him opt for the way he has chosen and withdraws His support and help. Therefore with respect to the obligations we owe to Allah (SWT), to our own selves and to our fellow human beings we should look towards what our Lord has ordained for us. That and that alone should be our inspiration. Then only will our vision remain clear and our target defined. If instead we

follow our own whims and wishes we may God forbid become the victim of the Qur'anic prophecy:

> *"We appoint for him that unto which he himself hath turned and expose him unto hell, a hapless journey's end."* [al-Qur'an 4:115]

The Three Levels of Our Religious Duties: An Analogy of a Building

It will be helpful to use the analogy of a building with three floors in order to understand the true nature of our religious obligations. With the help of this analogy I will first explain the concept as it applies to men. Later I will specify the duties that are equally applicable to women and point out when and if there is a disparity in men and women's respective roles. I want you to bring to mind a building that has three floors and is standing on four pillars. On the ground floor all you can see are the pillars since there are no walls but of course there is the foundation beneath the pillars that supports them. The first and second floors are situated above the ground floor. It is important to note that although the second floor is the highest part of the whole building, it is by no means the most important part since it could not have existed if the other two lower floors were not there. In that sense, therefore, the foundation is of key importance. The second most important are the pillars for they carry the weight of the whole structure.

This building accurately represents our religious obligations. The foundation is faith upon whose strength

the strength and security of the whole building depends. If the foundation is deep and firmly entrenched in the ground, the above lying structure will be unshakable. On the other hand, if the foundation itself is weak and wobbly the building can come crashing down any moment. The pillars are the four obligatory forms of worship: the daily prayer, fasting, charity and pilgrimage. The roof of the first level can be referred to as "*Islam*". At this stage the person submits wholeheartedly to the commands of Allah and His Messenger (SAW), becoming a slave of Allah in the truest sense of the word thereby fulfilling the very purpose of his creation. Allah (SWT) says:

> *"I created the Jinn and humankind only that they might worship me." [al-Qur'an 51:56]*

When this submission and piety reaches its climax, it is characterized by the level of consciousness that one is in the presence of Allah (SWT). This is the ground floor of the edifice we are describing.

At the next floor or level the person invites others towards the message of Islam, striving to the best of his ability to spread and propagate it. He enjoins what is right, forbids that which is evil and performs the duty of making the Truth manifest so that on the Day of Judgment people would not be able to proclaim that they were ignorant of it. On the third level one is required to work for the establishment of *Deen*. Terms such as "Islamic revolution" become relevant here. The goal is to implement Islamic Law in its totality so that the Word of God reigns supreme, so that it becomes the law of the land taking precedence over everything else until the whole social structure including the parliament and the judiciary are subordinate

to it. To work towards this end by utilizing all one's material and mental resources, to live for this cause and be ready to die for it as well, this is what constitutes the third and highest level of our religious responsibilities.

The First Level : The Difference between the Roles of Men And Women

There is little, if any, difference between the roles of the two genders as far as the ground floor is concerned. Faith is an essential pre-requisite for the salvation of all human beings irrespective of their gender. The words occurring in *Surah* Al-'Asr and *Surah* Al-Teen *"save those who believe and do good works"* are general in nature applying to both men and women. Furthermore it is categorically stated in *Surah* Al-Nisa that those who acts righteously, be they male or female, will surely enter paradise. Muslim males and females are equally obliged to abide by the injunctions regarding the lawful and the forbidden and the four pillars also are equal in importance for both. The difference however is that women are exempted from the congregational prayer and encouraged to pray at home. In addition, they cannot perform hajj unless and until there is a *Mahram* to escort them. It is true that the Prophet (SAW) urged believing women to attend the Friday and *'Eid* prayer but those are two exceptions and the overriding rule is that it is better for ladies to offer their prayers privately rather than at public places.

Besides these and other negligible differences, the duties of Muslim men and women at the first stage are similar in nature. It will be pertinent here to discuss three important verses of *Surah* Al-Ahzab that deal with the

acquisition of faith, the primary source of which is the Qur'an itself. Indeed it is reading the Qur'an, learning and teaching it and pondering over it that gives rise to faith and strengthens our conviction. Allah (SWT) says:

> *"And bear in mind that which is recited in your houses of the revelations of Allah and wisdom. Lo, Allah is subtle, aware." [al-Qur'an 33:34]*

The wives of the Prophet (SAW) are being addressed here. In their houses the Prophet (SAW) himself recited the verses of the Qur'an and explained them. The word "wisdom" (*"Hikmah"*) therefore refers to the Qur'an - the fountainhead of knowledge and wisdom - as well as the *Hadith*. So the first and foremost lesson that is evident from the verse is that we are being told to engage ourselves in reading and comprehending the Qur'an and *Hadith* and in learning and teaching them because this is what will sustain and enrich our faith as well as bolster and reinforce it. If we hasten to the stage of propagation without first sufficiently strengthening our own faith, we will be putting the cart before the horse.

In the Qur'an usually the grammatical tense of the male gender is used while discussing the desirable traits of both men and women. Therefore, wherever men are addressed it is understood that women are also being spoken to. The following *Ayah* however is an exception in the sense that both genders are mentioned separately. This signifies that the qualities that Islam expects of its followers are the same for men and women.

> *"Lo men who surrender unto Allah, and women who surrender, and men who believe and women who believe, and men who obey and women who obey, and*

men who speak the truth and women who speak the truth, and men who persevere (in righteousness) and women who persevere, and men who are humble and women who are humble, and men who give alms and women who give alms, and men who fast and women who fast, and men who guard their modesty and women who guard (their modesty), and men who remember Allah much and women who remember, Allah hath prepared for them forgiveness and a vast reward." [al-Qur'an 33:35]

The ten traits that are mentioned in this *Ayah* are explained as follows:

1. Muslim men and Muslim women: those who submit totally and unconditionally to the will of God.
2. Believing men and believing women: those who believe in Allah, the angels, the prophets, the revealed books and the Day of Judgment.
3. Obedient men and obedient women, who stand like slaves, all vigilant for the master's call.
4. Truthful men and truthful women, who are true in words and deeds.
5. Patient men and patient women: Patience is a very comprehensive term. Patience can mean abstaining from the forbidden. Patience can imply doing Allah's bidding in testing times. For instance performing ablution with icy cold water in the winter when warm water is not available is a manifestation of patience and perseverance. Patience also refers to remaining steadfast in the face of all odds while following the straight path.
6. Humble men and humble women, who humble themselves in front of Allah (SWT).

7. Charitable men and charitable women, who spend on others for the sake of pleasing Allah (SWT).
8. Fasting men and fasting women.
9. Men and women who strictly guard their modesty.
10. Men and women who indulge much in Allah's remembrance.

In the next *Ayah*, the essence of the first level is stated in a very explicit manner:

> *"And it becomes not a believing man or a believing woman, when Allah and His messenger have decided an affair (for them), that they should after that claim any say in their affair; and whoso is rebellious to Allah and His messenger, verily goes astray in error manifest." [al-Qur'an 33:36]*

This means that there is no room whatsoever for any believing man or woman to act according to their personal preference once Allah and His messenger have passed their verdict regarding a particular matter. The only option open to them in that case is to listen and to obey. And if one chooses to differ from the decision of Allah and His Messenger (SAW), that is open disobedience and a kind of disbelief. We are free to act according to our will and understanding if there is no explicit ruling about some issue. But if the ruling exists, choosing to bypass it will lead us into manifest error.

As mentioned earlier there is a minimal difference between the responsibilities of men and women at the first stage but the disparity gradually becomes more and more pronounced as we advance to the higher levels. We need to understand that the basis for this disparity is that Islam lays great emphasis on modesty and chastity and aspires

to uphold and preserve these values in the Muslim society. That is why there is a separate dress code for men and women. There is an *Ayah* in *Surah* Al-Noor that deals with the issue of *Purdah* (women's covering). That however is a separate topic. What we need to understand here is that the difference in the nature of the duties assigned to men and women is that Islam seeks to maintain an atmosphere of purity in the society.

Islam discourages unnecessary intermingling of the genders and determines separate spheres of activity for them. In this context we can easily understand why it is best for the woman to pray in the most secluded part of her home and why she is not encouraged to go to the mosque. In short the rationale behind the dissimilarity between men and women's roles, whether it is slight or pronounced, is to close all avenues that may lead to indecency and immorality.

The Second Level: The Three Circles of Da'wah:

One general principle of propagation that our religion has recommended for us is that while calling others towards the message of Islam, we should begin by first reforming our own selves. Next we should focus on those who are closest to us; our immediate family members. Then we may approach other people. If we keep this sequence in mind, we can conclude that for the Muslim woman the highest priority should be her home. She should bring up her children as Muslims in the true sense of the word. The second circle of propagation includes Muslim women and the third consists of *Mahram*

males. This is the area in which she is to work. In *Surah* Al-Tahreem Allah (SWT) says:

> *"Save yourselves and your families from the fire." [al-Qur'an 66:6]*

We should also consider the following *Hadith* in this context:

> *"Every one of you is like a shepherd and every one of you is accountable for your stock."*

Just like the shepherd is responsible for the safety of his herd, each and every one of us is responsible for the people he is in charge of. The Prophet (SAW) added:

> *"And the man is responsible for his family and he will be held answerable for those he is in charge of."*

He will be asked about whether he carried out his duties of educating them and fulfilling their rights. Then the Prophet (SAW) said:

> *"And the woman is responsible for her husband's home and she will be asked about whoever she is given charge of."*

Naturally her children are the most vital part of her husband's home. In fact in one narration the word "children" is mentioned separately.

It goes without saying that the future of a nation depends, to a great extent, on its coming generation and the tremendous task of bearing and rearing it has been placed squarely on the shoulder of mothers. It is the

mother who acts as the very embodiment of selflessness, sacrificing her own comfort for the sake of her children. It is the mother who acts as the first school that the child comes in contact with. We have had the privilege of witnessing with our own eyes such mothers who used to recite the Qur'an while nursing their child and grinding grain. Something of value must have been transferred form the mother to the child in a subtle and imperceptible manner during this process. After all we are asked to say the *Adhan* (call to prayer) in the newborn's ears. There has to be some logic behind this ritual. The infant, no doubt, is not capable of making sense of the words but all of us know that the tape-recorder is also a senseless device that efficiently records voice impressions and reproduces them. Therefore, it would not be too far fetched to assume that some meaningful impressions are conveyed to the child's sub-conscious which leave a lasting impact on his personality.

The biggest responsibility entrusted to the mother is the training of her children. She must not engage herself in any other activity at the cost of this main task. If however her circumstances are such that she can spare some time, she should definitely do propagation work outside her home.

The practice of going to remote corners of the world for propagation and not putting our own house in order first is tantamount to reversing the proper sequence of events. We should remember the Qur'anic admonition:

> *"Do you enjoin righteousness upon mankind and you yourself forget (to practise it)?"* *[al-Qur'an 2:44]*

We cannot go on a mission to save the world unless we save ourselves first. Our younger generation is at the receiving end of the most vicious onslaught of western cultural influences. The popular mass media is bringing vulgarity, obscenity and apostasy to our doorstep and inside our living rooms. In this scenario we cannot afford to be careless with respect to protecting our children and ingraining the right values in their minds at the right time.

As far as stepping out of the home to preach to other women is concerned, surely that needs to be done in a very organized manner but middle-aged women are best suited for the task since the restrictions of *Purdah* are relaxed to a great extent in their case. However what happens in our society is that the ladies who have always been observing *Purdah* and staying at home become so accustomed to it that they are reluctant to go out even in their old age. I believe this attitude needs to be changed. They should not hesitate to participate in activities that involve studying and teaching the Qur'an in their own cities, even if they are not accompanied by *Mahrams*. As far as young women are concerned it is extremely inappropriate for them to go out alone. If they can afford to devote time to the propagation of their *Deen,* they should cover themselves properly and a *Mahram* should accompany them. Keeping these general guidelines in mind, Qur'anic study circles must be arranged and there should be systematic and intensive effort to organize gatherings on a regular basis for the purpose of effectively propagating and disseminating the message of Qur'an to the masses. That is the need of the time.

You must have noticed that under the influence of various Islamic movements like the Tableeghi Jama'at and

Jama'at-e-Isalmi, more and more young men and women belonging to the middle class are choosing to adopt the Islamic way of life. We see many bearded young men and veiled young women whose parents are oblivious to Islamic values. In this scenario the younger generation needs to reach out to the older one in order to invite them to the right path. The third circle for Muslim women, therefore, involves their *Mahram* men. Please note that one's husband's nephews are not *Mahram*.

In Pakistan we see that a particular Islamic revolutionary group sends its female members for door-to-door canvassing prior to the elections. Since the said group aspires to bring about change through the ballot box, naturally they need to get in touch with the masses for large scale campaigning which probably leaves them no choice but to send the women door to door. But whatever their compulsions are, this practice is highly inappropriate. Even though they follow the Islamic dress code, they go to houses of people who are completely alien to them. Islam does not even allow Muslim women to freely mingle with unfamiliar women as is obvious form the word in *Surah* Al-Nur: *"their women"*. How can it sanction visiting the houses of perfect strangers?

We believe that real change in the existing system can never be brought about via the elections unless and until it is preceded by a moral and intellectual revolution that permeates all segments of the society. We need to work towards forming a party of Allah first and for that women should be ideally be working within the three circles that have been discussed above.

In exceptional situations, their duties may exceed the ones mentioned. However under the present conditions, working within these three spheres is all that they are required to do in the realm of propagation of *Deen*.

The Third Level: Women and the Struggle for the Establishment of Deen:

The third level involves the struggle for the establishment of *Deen* and for bringing about an Islamic revolution. At this stage the formation of an organized group of individuals becomes inevitable. Such a group will consist of committed individuals who will stand united for a single purpose: abolishing the tyranny of the status quo to set up, in its place, the ideal Islamic System of Social Justice. These individuals will be ready to lay down their lives in the line of duty if the need arises. This is a responsibility that women have been exempted from except in certain extreme cases. Some people falsely assume that women too are required to participate in this highest level of the hierarchy of our responsibilities. They argue that in the glorious history of Islam women did leave their homes and sacrifice their lives. Sumayyia (RA) was martyred along with her husband Yasir (RA). Ruqayyia (RA) migrated to Madina just like her husband Usman (RA) did. However the people who quote these instances fail to realize that the migration and martyrdom of these women represent the essence and apex of the first level. It was for the sake of her staunch belief in the oneness of Allah (SWT) that Sumayyia (RA) did not yield before Abu Jahal. It was a matter of standing up for what one believes in and remaining steadfast even if one's life is

at stake. It was not a matter of encountering the disbelievers in the battlefield. Even today if a believing woman is faced with a choice between her faith and her life, the best and the most honorable thing to do is to give up her life rather than her faith. It is however permissible in Islam to profess disbelief verbally in such a life threatening situation. 'Ammar (RA) did exactly that. In short remaining loyal to one's religion is something that applies to both men and women as does migrating in the way of Allah (SWT). Please note the following verse of *Surah* Al-e-Imran:

> *"And their Lord hath heard from them (and He says): Lo! I suffer not the work of any worker, male or female, to be lost. You proceed one from another. So those who fled and were driven forth from their homes and suffered damage for My cause, and fought and were slain, verily I shall remit their evil deeds from them and verily I shall bring them unto gardens underneath which rivers flow." [al-Qur'an 3:195]*

Men and women were all put through the same ordeals. They were the victim of the same hatred and persecution. And they were all forced to leave their beloved homes. On the other hand we don't find any instance of women-participation in the armed conflict that Muhammad (SAW) and his valiant companions were involved in. The Prophet (SAW) sent eight expeditions immediately after the hijrah and there is no mention of any woman being sent. The first real battle fought in the way of Allah (SWT) in Islamic history is the battle of Badr. A detailed account of the battle is found in the books of Islamic history and *Hadith*. It is not cited anywhere that Muslim females took part in it. On the basis of this we can easily determine what our religion requires from us. Instead of inventing fictitious

duties for us, we should objectively understand our actual responsibilities. We do find reference to the presence of women in the battle field of Uhad but it was an emergency situation. The news that seventy muslims had been martyred had reached Madinah. There was the rumor that the Prophet (SAW) himself had been martyred. Naturally there was a state of extreme panic in the city. Moreover Uhad was only two and a half miles way from Madinah. Therefore, muslim women rushed to the scene of the battle to tend the wounded and supply water. In addition we must keep in mind that the commands regarding *Purdah* had not been sent down at that time. Afterwards in the battle of Ahzab, which was the toughest battle, Muslims fought while women stayed inside a fortress. Only Safiya (RA) is said to have killed a jew in self-defence.

It is important for us to keep the chronological sequence of events in mind. The injunctions regarding *Purdah* were revealed in *Surah* Al-Ahzab, which was sent down after the battle of Ahzab. *Surah* Al-Noor was revealed in 6 A.H. and in 7 A.H. the battle of Khayber took place. The following incident that is narrated in the books of *Hadith* and history throws light on the role of women in

> *"Hashraj bin Ziyad narrates from his grand mother that she and five other women left for Khyber along with the Prophet (SAW). She says, 'When the Prophet (SAW) learned of our presence, he called for us. When we came to him, he was furious and said, 'With whom have you come and with whose permission?' We said, 'We will make wool and work in the cause of Allah (SWT). We have some bandages for the wounded; we will hand arrows to the fighters and give them water.' The Prophet (SAW) said, 'Get up and go back. When Khyber was conquered the*

Prophet (SAW) gave us a share from the spoils of the battle. 'Hashraj says he asked his grandmother about what she received as share. She replied, 'Some dates.'"

There are lessons to be learnt from this story. The prophet's query: "with whom have you come and with whose permission" is very important in the sense that whenever a woman comes out of her house we should see to it that she is accompanied by a *Mahram*. Sometimes women who want to work for their religion become over-zealous and cross certain limits that they are supposed to stay within. For example they begin to neglect their household duties and their children. It will be useful for such ladies to bear in mind a certain incident from the Prophet's life:

Asma bint al-Yazeed was an Ansari woman. She was Ma'aaz bin Jabal's cousin. This is the same Ma'aaz about whom the Prophet (SAW) is reported to have said that he is "the most knowledgeable among them as regards the lawful and the forbidden". Once Asma came to the Prophet (SAW) and said: Women have sent me to you as their representative. What all of them are saying is similar to what I will say and they have the same point of view as me. Allah (SWT) sent you as a prophet to both men and women. Therefore we believed you and obeyed you. As women we are supposed to observe Purdah and remain inside our homes. Our duty is to keep our men satisfied and to look after their children. Men outdo us in matters such as the Friday congregational and funeral prayer and also in fighting in the way of Allah (SWT). When they go to war we protect their houses and tend their children. Will we get the same reward as them?" When the Prophet (SAW) heard her eloquent speech, he turned to the sahabah and asked them:

"Have you ever heard a woman give a more excellent speech about her religion than this one?" All of the companions of the Prophet (SAW) swore that they haven't. Then the Prophet (SAW) turned to Asma and said: "O Asma, help me in conveying my answer to the women who sent you as their representative. Fulfilling your housekeeping responsibilities, keeping your husbands happy and co-operating with them, is equal to all those acts of the men that you have described". Asma (RA) returned happily after listening to this answer and did not raise any objections.

What we must learn from the incident is that our actual aim is to carry out the tasks that Allah (SWT) has assigned to us. If we assume certain duties that are not meant for us in the first place, it will be totally unfair to our own selves. In that case we would be in the danger of becoming the victim of the Qur'anic prediction:

"We appoint for him that unto which he himself hath turned."

Whenever an individual takes on unnecessary self-assigned duties, Allah (SWT) lets him do it but He withdraws His help and support. And if, in the process, he happens to exceed Divinely ordained limits, he may end up among the unfortunate lot in hell according to the Qur'anic words:

"We appoint for him that unto which he himself hath turned and expose him unto hell, a hapless journey's end." [al-Qur'an 4:115]

Collective Life: Compulsory for Both Men and Women

In spite of all this, as far as the importance of collective life is concerned, I believe it is the same for both men and women because it fosters the kind of positive environment in which we take inspiration from others. It is while being a part of this collective existence that we find the motivation to do more and more good deeds and the courage to abandon the forbidden things. Therefore Allah (SWT) has not deprived women of the the spiritual benefits of belonging to an organization. Allah (SWT) says in *Surah* Al-Taubah:

> *"And the believers, men and women, are protecting friends one of another; they enjoin the right and forbid the wrong, and they establish worship and they pay the poor-due and they obey Allah and His messenger. As for these, Allah will have mercy on them. Lo! Allah is mighty, wise." (9:71)*

We have a women's wing in Tanzeem-e-Islami and they also take *Bai'yah*. Our highest priority is to emulate, in all matters and as closely as humanly possible, the example set by our Prophet (SAW). The Prophet (SAW) once said to Ma'az: "Come close to me" and then he said: "Come closer to me". Likewise, we should keep making an effort to approximate his conduct as closely as we can. Consequently in the Tanzeem that we have formed for the purpose of bringing about an Islamic Revolution we expect both men and women to refrain from evil and to struggle for making Allah's word reign supreme and we consider both and women as being bound by the pledge of allegiance occurring in the 111th verse of *Surah* Al-Taubah. However the comprehensive and inclusive *Bai'yah* of

"listening and obeying" that has been derived from an authentic tradition is specific for men only. For women the oath that occurs in the 12th verse of *Surah* Al-Mumtahinah is used. In the said verse, instead of the positive demand of "listening and obeying", women are asked, "not to disobey" the messenger of Allah. Furthermore in the context of obedience there is the condition that it will be required "in what is right"

Irrespective of all that, women still need to belong to a party and to pledge allegiance to a leader since it fosters in them the kind of collective consciousness that is very desirable. However, as we said earlier, they are not entrusted with the responsibility of directly taking part in the struggle for the establishment of *Deen*. At the third level, active participation of the kind that is obligatory on men is not required of women. They have a comparatively more passive, but nonetheless equally vital, role to play. Hence the best course of action for them is to stick to their Divinely prescribed role. May Allah (SWT) prevent us from taking on unnecessary burdens and may He help us fulfill, to the best of our abilities, the duties that he has assigned to us. Amen.

Dr. Israr Ahmad was born in 1932 in Hisar (India), graduated from King Edward Medical College (Lahore) in 1952 and received his Masters in Islamic Studies from The University of Karachi in 1965. He actively participated in the Independence Movement and was deeply affected by the thoughts of Maulana Mahmood Hassan, Allama Muhammad Iqbal, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Maulana Abul Ala Mawdudi. He gave up his medical practice in 1971 in order to devote the best of his time and abilities in service of Islam and its revival. As a result of his efforts, The Markazi Anjuman Khudam-ul-Qur'an Lahore was established in 1972, Tanzeem-e-Islami was founded in 1975, and Tehreek-e-Khilafat Pakistan was launched in 1991.

The Sole Aim Before

The Markazi Anjuman Khuddam-ul-Qur'an Lahore

Is to Disseminate and Propagate the Knowledge and Wisdom of

The Holy Qur'an

(The Foundation-Head of Faith and Enlightenment)

On a Vast Scale and at the Highest Intellectual Level
So as to Achieve

The Revitalization of Faith

Among the Muslims in General and Their Intelligentsia in Particular
With the Ultimate Objective of Bringing About an

Islamic Renaissance

And Ushering in, for the Second Time in History, the Blessed Era
in Which the True Islamic Way of Life Reigned Supreme

وَمَا النَّصْرُ إِلَّا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللهِ